

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 23, 2001 LB 711

maximum of 2.5 percent on an annualized basis. Now this is the ongoing COLA, and the 2.75 is a cap. So what you get is the higher of the rate of inflation or the lower...I'm sorry, if the rate of inflation is 3 percent, you get 2.75; if the rate of inflation is 2 percent, you get 2 percent. So any time the rate of inflation would exceed 2.75 percent, you're not going to get a full COLA adjustment under this proposal. This does not affect the purchasing...the purchasing power floor that is in place in this plan that guarantees that if...that if the rate of inflation runs for a period of time above and beyond the COLA allowance, that you'll be held harmless. It doesn't affect that floor. The other provision in this bill is a provision for a death benefit that is currently not allowed in the plan, and it is a death benefit that is extended to a spouse of a person who has five years of service or more in the plan but doesn't have a full 20 years of service, and there is a designation of a beneficiary in place, and it's the surviving spouse. It allows the surviving spouse to make an election between two different kinds of a benefit. One is a refund of the member's contribution account balance with interest, plus the employer's accumulated contributions with interest, or they can elect an annuity that is actuarially reduced based on a retirement age of age 60, reduced by 3 percent for each year payments begin before age 60, and then reduced for the 100 percent joint and survivor form of payment. That is a new benefit in the plan. Now, as we have also become somewhat accustomed to, I am happy to report to you that these proposed changes in the plan can be accomplished without any change in the contribution rate, either employer or employee, and no liability to the state of Nebraska by reason of the enhanced benefits. And in fact, we will still have on the act...on an actuarial basis, we will still have approximately \$51 million excess assets in the plan, based on the July 1, 2000 valuation, so that these benefits are paid for out of the excess assets that we had in the plan as of July 1 of the year 2000. That was the last actuarial valuation of this plan. Now, as I've indicated, that still leaves a reserve and it does not change or does not require an increase would be the more appropriate statement, does not require an increase in the contribution rate. The indicated contribution rate, the combined rate for both employer and employee is 13.94 percent. We have a combined contribution rate that is 14.35, so no